

**It can't be done one student at a time: Building capacity
through training and website development**

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About Montgomery County Public Schools, Maryland

- MCPS is the largest district in MD and the 16th largest in the U.S.
- Montgomery County is a large suburb northwest of Washington DC
- 200 schools
- 137,800 students from 163 countries
- 134 languages spoken
- 41% white, minorities 59%
- Free and reduced meals 25.8%
- 16,000 students with special needs- 11.9%

An Assistive Technology Paradigm Shift

Assistive technology service delivery for students with mild disabilities:

In Our District

- There are 2 teams that address assistive technology
- UDL has been the driving philosophy for HIAT from year 1

Rationale for a Paradigm Shift

The number of students with mild disabilities makes ongoing, direct service delivery unrealistic.

Rationale for a Centralized AT Team for Students with Complex, Low Incidence Disabilities (LID):

- AAC users, single switch and other alternate input users, students with MR or Autism, often require specialized, ongoing AT expertise.
- Programming an AAC device, designing alternate keyboard overlays, and using switch interfaces requires highly specialized training.

Rationale for a Different Model of Service Delivery for Students with High Incidence Disabilities (HID):

- Students with high incidence disabilities can benefit from technology.
- A more universal design (UDL) approach to technology implementation is needed in general education

Expert v.s. Consultation/Training Models of AT Service Delivery

- Low incidence disabilities
 - An expert model of AT service delivery is more appropriate to support staff and students with complex disabilities who need ongoing support.

- High incidence disabilities
 - A consultation/ training model, focusing on short-term guided practice and staff development is more appropriate to staff serving students with high incidence disabilities.

Expert v.s. Capacity Building Models of AT Service Delivery

Both types of service delivery are needed

Low incidence disabilities: Expert models of AT service delivery:

- have formal referral systems
- provide direct and ongoing assessment
- make decisions regarding AT based on their assessments
- share responsibilities for implementation
- supervise long term equipment loans
- train school staff and students

High incidence disabilities: A capacity-building model:

- is a resource to all staff
- does not conduct assessment which is a school-based task
- guides decisions on AT
- do not have a lead role in implementation
- may provide trial loans, but not long term loans
- provides short term training
- focuses on district level training

HIAT Provides School Support

- Request for support by email
- Initial documentation
 - Student Profile
 - IEP
- HIAT's consultation role explained
- School team sets up a SETT meeting
- Trial period documentation and parent communication is the responsibility of the school.
- Follow up is the responsibility of the school; to update the IEP, to obtain needed AT tools.

SETT Meetings

- It is a school decision whether to include: staff only, parents, student
- Forms completed on a laptop during the meeting
- All information is shared with the family
- Collaboration is imperative so that school team takes ownership
- Staff describe the student's strengths and needs.
- Staff identify the tasks the student needs to accomplish.
- All members brainstorm AT tools without judging.
- AT tools are selected by the school team for the trial period.

Trial Periods

- Selected AT tools are written on the Trial Period form.
- Conditions for AT use are identified.
- Length of trial period is agreed upon.
- Indicators of effectiveness are defined.
- Training needs are identified and training dates are scheduled; Train older students directly.
- Identify staff person responsible for follow-up.

Trial Period Equipment Loans for Students with HID

- Use short term no tech, low tech and/or laptop loans (with printers) for the duration of the trial periods with a set start and stop date (around 4 weeks).
- Supply mock purchase orders to help schools order needed AT.

HIAT website

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/hiat/>

- We have 75 downloadable tools for teachers.
- Last year we averaged 4500 downloads per month
- Lately we've averaged 10,000 visitors per month.

Website pages

- Training
- Resources
- Quick Guides
- Websites
- Tech Success Stories
- Forms
- FAQs

Training

A Proactive Staff Development Plan is essential

Last year HIAT conducted 92 scheduled trainings on using technology to support students

Approaches to Training: Think Broadly

You will need a variety of training approaches

- ✓ After school training (focus on groups, not 1-1)
- ✓ Stipend training
- ✓ 1 to 3 credit courses
- ✓ On-line training
- ✓ Outcome-based training
- ✓ Summer training
- ✓ Independent study

E-T.I.P.S.

Educators using **T**echnology to **I**mprove the **P**erformance of **S**tudents

- A focus on classes that emphasize technology integration
- Classes across a variety of departments (Technology, Media, Supporting Services)
- Recognizes teachers who seek continuous improvement in the use of technology

At the end of the first year, we have over 200 teachers working towards E-TIPS recognition.

Parent T.I.P.S.

Parents using **T**echnology to **I**mprove the **P**erformance of **S**tudents

- School to home collaboration
- Promoting UDL to parents
- Teaching parents how to use technology at home to support schoolwork

Outreach

REACH beyond Special Ed to collaborate with:

Tech specialists
Media and library staff
Curriculum
IT staff
Professional development trainers

Network educators to share lessons, resources and ideas.

Some Final Thoughts About HID Service Delivery

- Don't be afraid to change service delivery or initiate a new way of providing AT support.
- Promote UDL.
- Appeal to staff who are tech savvy.
- Look for new ways to approach key staff.
- Build local capacity.
- Think outside the box on training
- Look for new ways to share resources via the internet